



Data Points

CWHS

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Vaginal douching has been associated with a number of reproductive health problems in women. Douching disrupts the vaginal flora and increases the risk for pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and bacterial vaginosis. Douching may also be associated with infections of the urinary tract.

Women ages 18 to 44 were asked; ***"During the past 12 months, have you douched?"*** Women answering yes were also asked, ***"How often do you douche?"***

- Of women surveyed, 26% of women had douched at least once during the past 12 months. An additional 17% had douched at least once a month.
- Older women were more likely to report frequent douching than were younger women: 21% of women ages 35 to 44 reported douching at least once a month compared to 12% of women ages 18 to 24.

Ethnicity was related to douching practices.

- African American women were more likely to have douched in the past year than were women of other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of women who reported douching at least once a month varied by ethnic group: 47% of Black/African American women reported this practice compared to 12% of White women, 21% of Hispanic women and 11% of Asian women.

Lower educational status was related to more frequent douching.

- Of women with less than a college education, 34% reported douching compared to only 20% who had at least some college education.

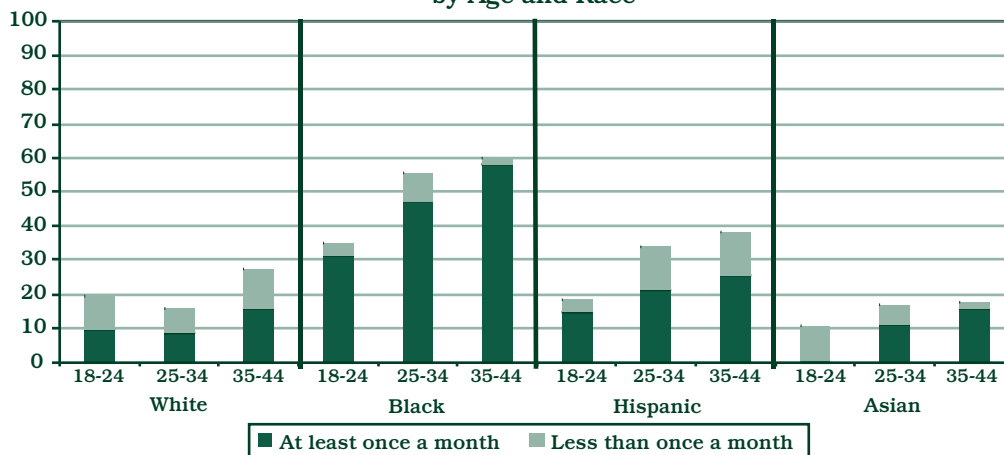
DOUCHING AMONG CALIFORNIA WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE, 2000

Sexually Transmitted
Disease Control Branch,
California Department of
Health Services

Public Health Message:

More than a quarter of the women surveyed reported douching, a health behavior associated with genital infection and poor reproductive health.

Frequency of Douching Among California Women
by Age and Race



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